



An Open Space event held at Community Links

Final Report

20th July 2013

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1. What projects can Community Links provide to enable a more connected and vibrant community?
2. How do you cope with huge cultural/ demographic differences between different areas of Newham?
3. How do you connect incoming pioneers and economic migrants (young/ more male/ more likely to be single) with long- standing residents?
4. How do you keep long-standing residents connected with important changes?
5. As Newham is one of the leading boroughs in London today, the Mayor of London should recognise it more because of the Olympics. I suggest that Newham's town hall should have meetings together every month so that they have same words.
6. How do we stay connected and supportive in regard to the new welfare reforms?
7. Bridging the gap between young and old people
8. How do we connect the 40-60 year olds who are still working? Most 50+ groups in Newham are during the day.
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**For further information on this
report or the event please contact;
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On the 20th of July 2013 an open space event was held at Community Links around the theme, “How do we make Newham a more connected and vibrant community?”

Participants were asked to come along to the event that was aimed at engaging residents of the London Borough of Newham in a conversation around their thoughts on what actions or projects, small or large would contribute to increasing the connectivity of what it means to live in both the neighbourhoods that make up Newham and the whole borough as a geographical location. There was no plan or agenda set for the day, all that was confirmed was the starting and end time and the theme that posed a question for those in attendance to answer.

At the beginning of the event, those present were invited to propose topics for conversation and debate and there now follows a record of those conversations, recorded on at the time by those present in the discussion. There then follows a summary of actions generated by each conversation and the results of the dot democracy that took place to establish three actions to take forward from the actions the discussions created.

Topic	What can community links do to support & enable a more vibrant and connected community?	
Convenor	Name	Nim
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
	Phyllis	
	Jennifer	
	Mary	
	Tony	
	Susan	
	Siraj	
	Ebenezer	
	Marian	
	Angela	
	Kim	
	Laura	

Main points discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring back all the old services and projects- they worked. • Workshops on how to set up and develop community centres, fundraising and infrastructure support -something like what is offered in manor park+ forest gate from CIU and the Froud centre. • Help broker a relationship between community and people building new estates to make sure community spaces are built • Fundraising could come from residents (50p a week each, local businesses, big businesses etc.) adopt a local charity. Rooms for hire, like for children’s parties at community centres • Newham is a very segregated borough and needs support in getting together • Support more integration- getting people together and mixing together • Community links could hold big events- cooking, music etc. • Plan; Get streets together and when they are together, get the whole neighbourhood together – but street by street towards a whole neighbourhood. From the grassroots up! • Talk to people from different communities in the area and bring people together, such as Age concern, Community Links etc to form a partnership. • Language barriers keep people apart • Find community interpreters and/or champions who can be a leader for their

community and enable integration between groups

Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)

- Go backwards- bring back family + community events and activities.
Community Links used to be a greater asset to the community- need more!
- Get Community champions/leaders from different communities across Newham and get different groups together
- Get champions to support integration together - we are stronger together
- Develop English language for migrant communities this way, using champions
- Intergenerational projects history, music, food, culture, arts, etc
- Support neighbourhood development from small/ grassroots up → support the streets individually and then develop to neighbourhood projects, and then to whole borough – community development has to start from the bottom up!
- Street based representative - engaging people knowing everyone on the streets is needed Maybe retired? Maybe around all day.
- Support outsiders ASAP

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Topic	Connecting people across diverse cultural, generational & economical backgrounds	
Convenor	Name	Susan Masters
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
	Toni Nash	
	Siraj Izhar	
	Mariah	
	Ebenezer	
	Laura	

Main points discussed

- Education: divisive impact of faith based free schools. Should choice of school be a right of parents or does social cohesion take precedence?
- Why are some self contained ethnic communities vilified whereas others are tolerated by media (Hassidic Jews in Stanford hill and Somalis)
- Are problems matters of differences in race, culture, nationality age or gender
- Need for more of a human interface in service delivery → rise of online delivery (universal credit etc.)
- One entry who can advise you on channels
- What is the basis of community- shared history?

Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)

- Eating together → sharing food from different cultures
- Music
- Sport- Olympics
- Universal languages

Topic	How to engage long standing residents in and take in change, keep them engaged.	
Convenor	Name	Susan Masters
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
	Angela, Janet Ebenezer, Laura, Jennifer, Sue, Phyllis, Mary	

Main points discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents associations • Road workers as “community workers” in all but name. • They would know everything that is going on and can offer help and have relationships. • Community centres – having resident “social worker “at hub. • Consistent communication, understand people can have bad days/be thoughtful. • “<u>Street reps</u>” know all residents, kids or older ones and keep an eye on incoming strangers. • Find a way of using Mincom for the older generation, for the vulnerable it's valuable in times of austerity.
Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street representative as basis for resilience. • Find away of integrating elderly into community (reps) – cookery, • Coming networks making regular weekly conditions to run activities, door knocking.

Topic	As Newham is on the leading borough in London today, the Mayor of London should recognise it more because of the Olympics. I suggest that Newham's town hall should have meetings together every month so that they have same words.	
Convenor	Name	Ebenezer
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
	Angela	
	Siraj	

Main points discussed	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newham was highlighted due to Olympics • Lots of people suffered as a result of Olympics and should be compensated • The streets have become more dirty • Council are not efficient enough. Problems are not resolved 	
Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free access to queen Elizabeth park for Newham residents • Council to be more effective • Needs to be explored + expressed. 	

Topic	How can we stay connected and supportive during the welfare reforms? How have we gone from Olympics to
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	food banks?	
Convenor	Name	Toni Nash
	Contact information	
	Siraj	
	Mary Thomas	
	Kim Barclay	
	Ellie	
	Laura Holland	
	Ali Ismail	
	Mum (Ruun)	

Main points discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money spent on PR things not people things. Attract people with money • Distracted by shiny stuff • Not enough housing for single people • Pushing people over a cliff- cant afford to stay in London • Feelings of labour holding the monopoly, feelings of “no point” voting • Feelings of anger/frustration/ betrayal • Olympics didn’t cause food banks- it distracted us from social problems. • Underlying • Worried about the future • Need to support disabled residents
Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support people to have a voice/ encourage people to vote • Looking objectively at each party and informing people/ physically escorting people to vote • What can we persuade our residents to give their energy to? • Off shoot discussion→ Smaller businesses to think big (initiatives, consortiums) • Collective voice – more powerful • Lobby group • Petitioning • Collate peoples stories • Siraj- would be interested in speaking to people affected by bedroom tax • Keeping Dial-a-ride • Send a letter to everyone in the community to sign a petition or come so we can collate their stories

Topic	Bridging the gap between young and old people
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Convenor	Name	June & Jen
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
	Jen	
	Agatha	
	June	
	Angela	
	Nim	
	Lisa	

Main points discussed

- Do more events with young and old people, more intergeneration work in youth centres etc.
- Discussions about heritage and oral history. Culture, history, music → (issues are the same)
- How young people are presented and how old people are afraid of young people
- There is no provisions for young people between 18-23, therefore they are bored
- Bring back community spirits. Educate both of the struggle
- If we bridge the gap between young and old people then we can bring back community spirit and by re-introducing community centres on estates and handing back control to parents and the older generation

Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)

- Introducing culture on a museum style
- More intergenerational work in the borough
- Take young people into residential houses. Input it in the curriculum
- More community centres on estates and more accessible
- Doing intergenerational projects like cooking. Older people would be able to teach young people how to cook meals.
- Bring back community centres. Community members would volunteer and run the centres
- Collaboration between services i.e. reading to the older generation and performing in residential Christmas concerts
- Educate young people about their history. You cannot go forward before you know where you came from
- Young people need to explain their issues to the old to bridge the gap

Topic	How do we connect the 40-60 year olds who are still working? Most 50+ groups in Newham are during the day.	
Convenor	Name	Janet Colledge
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
Who was there	<i>Name</i>	<i>Contact information (telephone, email)</i>
	Rina	
	Resna	
	Susan	
	Agatha	
	June	
	Jennifer	
	Lisa	

Main points discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift workers/ Part Time • Zumba -360 awards free @ the place. Well attended • Clubs- problems booking halls • Those who need to be accompanied rely on working family/ friends • Retirement moving later • Repeat groups at different times • Forums/ surveys • Look at Havering circle type. (core group) • Utilising skills within groups • Using public spaces costs • Paying for activities • Link with colleges
Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review timing • Central community area. Internet etc. • Social networking. Advertisements • Publicity/ markets- central group/ forum • Utilize connections with local college.

Topic	Disability Isolation	
Convenor	Name	Angela
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
	Angela	
	Mariam	
	Ebenazar	
	Ellie	
	Janet	

Main points discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for support for those wishing to take initiative to run events • All 32 London boroughs should have a London wide policy to support disabled communities • There should be a co-ordination body to ensure charity groups don't provide duplicated services and improve continuity • Sustainability of projects essential. Constant creation of projects • A newsletter might be a good idea. Not run by one person but lots of contributors promoting and creating new activities • Advertising job sided trips would be good. • Using the internet will help as its useful for finding groups-libraries has an index • Lots of small groups without co-ordination • Duplicated services • Community Links hubs not usable everywhere • Need to promote services • Mentoring would be a good idea
Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination • Communication • Befriending/ welcome service to group for those nervous • Info for people who cant use internet

Topic	Affordable community space

Convenor	Name	Sue
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
Who was there	<i>Name</i>	<i>Contact information (telephone, email)</i>
	Sally	
	Sue	

Main points discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For small establishing groups some community space including Community Links is at the price range • Or support groups to start that don't need a space because all activities are trips or bringing together in public • We want to encourage people to move around the borough as there are lovely places like barrier park farm
Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite groups to share space in a cooperative to lower costs • Start a group that coordinates activities and events like trips and don't need a space- a movement group

Topic	Talking to young people
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Convenor	Name	Eden
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
	Ellie	

Main points discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children don't know what they want to do. • Young girls and boys more interested in cultural & social interests than school • Way that parents communicate with their children • Pop culture having an influence on children • No love in families → how do you bring this into their lives • Gap in understanding between kids & children
Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions for parents on 'how to deal with your 21st century child' • Help kids to think realistically about their expectations & life choices → go into schools. • Educating young people about good choices

Topic	Councillors (different sides of labour party)
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Convenor	Name	Toni/ sue
	Contact information (telephone, email)	
	Gilbert Clarke	
	Janet Colledge	

Main points discussed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides of borough (west/east) • Eastham more wary? West ham more outgoing? • Respect party • Great at all inclusive policies will respect upset this and divert us to diversion • UKIP- a threat? • Do councillors cover their own backs and support each other rather than residents? • Women's institute in forest gate- white, middle aged need more modern vision.
Recommendations/actions/next steps (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know your councillors- attend events • We want councillors to be passionate on our behalf! Not against us • Residents shouldn't demand unreasonable demands • How do we stop being spoon fed by the council and become more resilient • Price of drinks etc. in Olympic park, does not reflect locals cash flow • Install a sense of pride in our borough • Revival in local markets- Mary Portas?

Actions

<u>Statement</u>	<u>Score</u>
• Well cared for public space → 'looks nice'	0
• Councillors attend events & be more public	0
• Install sense of pride in the borough → revival in local markets	0
• Think about how to become more resilient as a community	0
• More community events and activities	1
• Community champions/ leaders from different communities	1
• Support neighbourhood development	0
• Start/ create a group for all Newham residents that don't need a space. E.g. goes on trips, meets in public parks etc. a moving group	0
• Street rep project	1
• Support everyone to have a voice and encourage people to vote.	2
• Provide info about the political parties/ inform people better (objectively)	1
• Encourage small businesses to think about bidding in consortiums	0
• Collect stories about welfare reforms	4
• Keep dial-a-ride	0
• Encourage people to sign petitions regarding welfare reforms	0
• Have street based reps → engage everyone on the streets	4
• Find way of integrating elderly into the community	1
• Sessions for parents about how to deal with your '21 st century kids'	6
• Programme to help children think realistically about life choices and expectations	1
• Free access to queen Elizabeth park for Newham residents	0
• Council → more effective	1
• Better organisation at community level	0
• Forums to express & explore our needs	1
• Events that bring people together → sharing food, music & sport. Universal language	8
• Clubs & activities for 50+ early eve	1
• Central community area internet website → social networking, advertising → need more advertising. An internet hub.	2
• Co-ordination of activities local for 50+ → so info can be gathered & shared	4
• Invite small groups to come together In a co-operative to share	5

space that is out of their price range	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services for disabled people need to be better co-ordinated to avoid duplication. Also communicated better in different formats (i.e. large text) 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Befriending services for people who are nervous 	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More info for people who cant use the internet 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce culture 'museum style' 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More intergenerational work 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take young people to residential homes & link it to the curriculum 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More community centres on estates 	4

Leading ideas from Dot democracy

**1. Events that bring people together a sharing food, music & sport.
Universal language**

2.Co-ordination of activities local for 50+ a so info can be gathered & shared

3. Co ordinate/ Invite small groups to come together in a co-operative to share space that is out of their price range

Closing comments of participants

Thank you to committing your Saturday today, spending the time here isn't the best thing to do so we appreciate you being here. Some passion on topics today have been great. We want to hear your positive and negative reactions today so that we know. To kick off, can we go around and give us one word that describes today. Positive or negative. You don't have to explain the word.

Eventful.

Helpful.

People together.

Thought provoking.

Interesting.

Expressive.

Informative.

Inspirational.

Enlightening.

Connecting.

Connecting also.

Community.

Heart-warming.

Innovative.

Hot!

We all can open the space, share with us, for some people it is an unusual format. We didn't set an agenda but are amazed at the richness of the information that came from it. How did you find it? (participants invited to comment)

“t was interesting, lots of people from different places and backgrounds agreeing on the same topic”

How many people knew each other?

I know 2 people from Twitter.

How many people knew 3/4 people? (One)

How many people know no-one (Most?)

Any other thoughts about today?

“I think the informal way was carried out on a different level, everyone felt relaxed. I didn't know what to expect but it's nice to sit down and express your opinion. The opinions were good and everyone could be happy to disagree with some points”

“We didn't do an icebreaker to get to know each other, so it's interesting to note how quickly conversations went”

What didn't work well?

What could we do better?

Smaller room.

Any other thoughts?

If we implement the suggestions, it would be better (All suggestions).

If we can work and make it happen, it would be brilliant. If we can do something about making the top 3 happen that's a start.

Thank you.

It is amazing to not have an agenda, it's more creative, there are less limits, as soon as you come to visit you can do whatever you want and talk about whatever you want. This meeting is yours. You're not here to just participate.

I'd like to thank you for providing access for me.

Thanks for raising it so we could arrange it.

Thanks and hand over your action cards on the way out. We will be in touch to let you know the results, if you haven't given your email address you have our

What is Open Space?

Open space is a method for holding meetings that means **people self organise**.

There are no speakers; no set agenda and timings are loose. The

people who come create the event on the day. They suggest the **agenda** and they organise their own **discussion groups**. They then set their priorities for continuing action at the end using '**dot democracy**' via coloured stickers. Often a follow-up group is formed.

Open Space works best when: 'a **major** issue must be resolved, characterised by significant **complexity** and **diversity**, the pressure of potential or actual **conflict** and a decision time of **yesterday**' (Harrison Owen, designer of Open Space method).

So an Open Space event focuses on a key question that matters for the groups or communities involved. The people who come suggest topics for discussion around this question that matter to them – their **passions** – and they take **responsibility** for the discussions and for the resulting action. They do not create a 'wish-list' for other people to do.

Both passion and responsibility are key to the success of open space.

This means that each participant needs to make sure they are contributing and/or learning at all times – if not the '**law of two feet**', or **law of mobility**, means you move on to another discussion which you can contribute to or learn from. Being self-organised means **you** organise your own time so that you get the most out of the event.

Harrison Owen developed and popularised Open Space from 1985. He felt the best bits of conferences or meetings were always the breaks and aimed to create those kinds of conversations all the time. He drew on ways of holding meetings he saw in West Africa and in other traditional communities. So aspects of open space may feel familiar to you. To find out more visit: openspaceworld.org.